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by the tide of flood from the great Northern Ocean being repelled by the island, which, causing a counter-current towards the west, makes the flood-tide appear to flow for nine hours, while the ebb seems to last only three.

The chapel of the Abbey is one hundred feet in length and thirty-four feet in breadth. On the north of the choir are the refectory, cells, and other apartments usually attached to monastic institutions. The eastern gable was formerly ornamented with several well-executed bas-reliefs, and its window was large, and enriched with sculpture, most of which has, of late years, been destroyed, and the remainder is mouldering to decay. On the south wall is a stone, bearing the following inscription, in Roman capitals:—

"HEIRE . LYETH . THE . BODIE . OF . JHN . MNAGHTEN .
FIRST . SECTARIE . TO . RANDAL . FIRST . ERLE . OF . AN-
TRIM . WHO . DEPARTED . THIS . MORTALITIE . IN . THE
YEAR . OF . OUR . LORD . GOD . 1630."

A small oratory has been newly roofed, and is used as a place of interment by the noble family of M'Donnell; its slated roof has considerably injured the picturesque effect of the ruin, giving to the whole, as seen from a little distance, the appearance, in a great measure, of a farm yard and barn. A window in the gable has been built up; over it, on the outside, is the following inscription, now nearly obliterated:—

"In Dei, Dei-Matrisque Virginis honorem,
Nobilissimus atque illustrissimus
Randolphus M'Donnell,
Comes de Antrim,
Hoc sacellum fieri curavit.
Anno. Dom. 1621.

This Abbey has been the place of sepulture of the noble family of Mac Donnell, or Donald, since its first settlement in the North. Here repose the ashes of Randal, first Marquis of Antrim, who took so active a part, and, at times, made so extraordinary a figure in the troubles of Charles I. and at the period of the Commonwealth. On the Restoration, in 1660, he went to England to pay his respects at court; but the king refused to see him, and he was sent the Tower, where he remained until March, 1661, when he was liberated on bail, and sent to Ireland, to undergo such punishment as the government might think fit. After a long inquiry into the charges made against him, he was dismissed by the Lords Justices, with leave to go to England; when Lord Massareene, to whom his estates had been granted, continuing to persecute him, he was compelled to produce, in the English House of Commons, the letter of Charles I. which gave him orders for taking up arms. This letter completely silenced his enemies, and he was restored to his estates, with the exception of the advowson of the different parishes.* He died at his seat of Ballymagerry, the 2d of February, 1682-3, and was interred on the 14th of the following March. On his leaden coffin are three inscriptions, one in the Irish language, which being translated, is as follows:

"At all times some calamity
Betals the Irish once every seventh year;
But now that the Marquis is departed,
It will happen every year."

The following is a free translation of the inscription in the Latin tongue:

"Randalle, invincible in (devotion to) country, Charles, and God,
Thyself a golden warrior, thou residest within the lead;
Whose fidelity, in the adverse fortune of war,
Rebels nor gibbets could not bend."

In this vault is also interred Christopher Fleming, the last Lord Slane, son of Randal, Lord Slane, by Penelope, daughter of Henry Moore, first Earl of Drogheda, and grandson of the Lady Anne M'Donnell, the daughter of Randall, the first Earl of Antrim. He espoused the cause of James II., and, in his flight, retired with him into France, and, in 1691, being attainted, the greater part of his estate, then valued at £25,000 per annum, was granted

to Godart de Ginkell, Earl of Athlone. He died in 1728.*

Tradition says, that in one of the plundering excursions made on the coast by the Scottish islanders, or Red-shanks, about 1550, they were attacked and routed by the English, and obliged to seek shelter within this Abbey; that the English, being unable to force the place, encamped on an eminence at some distance, from whence they discharged fiery arrows against the Abbey, which being, according to the custom of the country, covered with heath, took fire, and was consumed together with its inmates. The tradition adds, that, five years afterwards, the Abbey was rebuilt by Duncan, chief of the sept of M'Cormic, and dedicated to Christ and St. Francis.

The oral history of this neighbourhood states, that after the general dissolution of religious houses, this Abbey was for many years inhabited by a woman of extraordinary piety, called Sheelah Dubh ni Vilore, or Black Julia M'Quillan, but better known by the name of "the Black Nun of Bona Margy." She is said to have spent her time in the constant exercise of the most austere devotions, and to have possessed a wonderful knowledge of future events. Many of her predictions are believed to have been verified, and even yet some of them are alleged to be in the course of fulfilment.

In June 1808, there was found, in an adjoining rivulet, a rod of pure gold, thirty-eight inches in length; the ends terminated in narrow hooks, inflected in contrary directions. The hooks were massive, being nearly two inches in circumference, and the length of the hook at each extremity was also two inches. The rod consisted of three distinct *virgæ*, which were closely twisted together in the manner of a roasting fork. The workmanship was neat, but without ornament. The whole weighed twenty ounces and a half. For some time after it was found, the owner had not the most distant idea of its value, and it lay on his floor, tossed about, as a toy, by his children, until a pedlar, incautiously offering five pounds for it, excited attention to its importance.

In July 1832, the head and neck of a woodcock, in a petrified state, was found in the small river of Margy, near the Abbey. The bill and head were of the natural colour, and the joint at the back of the head moved in the same manner as when the bird was alive.

Carrickfergus.

SAMUEL M'SKIMIN.

* Mountmorres's History of the Irish Parliament. Gentleman's Magazine. Lodge's Peerage.

WHAT KIND OF KNOWLEDGE WOULD BE MOST BENEFICIAL TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND?

We are somewhat afraid to attempt to answer the question involved in the title of this article. Conflicting opinions seem to rise before us, and their clashing with each other might well intimidate a bolder mind. But in order to be distinctly understood, we must clear our way before we advance to the subject.

With the nature and quantity of religious knowledge and political information which should be imparted to the people of Ireland, this Journal has nothing whatever to do. Surely no one will infer from this oft reiterated declaration, that its Conductors are insensible to the interests of man as an immortal being, or his claims on society and good government in his social and relative capacity. But they do not think that they are unnecessarily dragging themselves before the public, when they affirm this little work to be the first which successfully detached literature from the unnatural connection which has so long unhappily subsisted between her and party prejudice in this country; and while carefully avoiding any interference with, or exhibiting any leaning to, the peculiar views or the particular prejudices of any class of men, endeavoured to address their fellow-countrymen as brothers, as rational and sensible beings, in short as MEN. Extending, the honest hand of friendship, we have said, Let each one form his own opinions on the grave matters of religion,

* Carte's life of the Duke of Ormond. Oldmixon's History of the Stuarts. Murder will Out.

or the stirring subject of politics ; but let us retreat for a little while into a quiet and calm region, where we may be secure from the noise and strife of the busy world, and enjoy the pleasures which spring from the cultivation of the intellect.

Understanding, then, the following remarks to be confined to *merely literary knowledge*, we will attempt to criticise what appears to us to be the prevailing taste of the people, and to point out what we think would have a tendency to correct and improve it. Peculiar circumstances have contributed to render the Irish an imaginative race. They delight in any thing which ministers to the gratification of this disposition of the mind ; and whatever is exciting in its nature—whatever speaks to the passions, appealing to the hopes, the fears, and the sympathies of the soul, is received with favour and acceptance. Cold indeed must that heart be which cannot enjoy a well-told tale ; and as dull is the head which cannot perceive the reason why stories of all descriptions are so generally sought after. No effort of the intellect is required to understand and to enjoy a story ; for as it professes to tell us how other beings of like passions with our own felt and acted in situations and circumstances which we can perfectly appreciate, the little world of our affections is stirred, the imagination receives a pleasurable excitement, either of a gay or mournful kind, and the heroes of the tale are adopted for the time into the family of our sympathies. The man who would attempt to set himself in utter opposition to this taste, if we may so term it, might as well attempt to change the mind of man ; it lies deep in human nature ; and the traditional tales and legends of the rudest nations, as well as the prettily-printed volumes of our own march-of-intellect days, prove the power which Imagination exercises, in every stage of the history of man. A considerable portion of our Journal since its commencement has been appropriated to the gratification of this taste ; and had we consulted the wishes of a numerous body of our readers rather than our convictions, we would have appropriated a considerable portion more. But we all along felt it as a defect in the literary taste of our countrymen that they are excessively fond of works of imagination. To such a degree is this carried, that any thing of a calm and purely intellectual nature is passed over, too often, with indifference ; it wants the excitement and stimulus which a story presents ; it does not enlist the passions ; it addresses itself to the understanding, instead of appealing to the imagination ; and our countrymen are proverbial as having hearts too warm for their heads. An excessive indulgence in this species of reading weakens the intellectual powers, and unsettles the mind ; and though, as Burke said, “a good novel is a good book,” and a well-told story is a capital thing, yet, in general, mere readers of novels and stories are either persons of imbecile judgment, or they are infected with that mawkish sentimentality which is at once offensive and disgusting to every individual possessing common sense. These observations apply with peculiar force to that species of caricature called “Irish Legends.” There is no man, however phlegmatic, but would enjoy a laugh over many of those “right merry conceits,” which pass current, and which are enjoyed with such a peculiar relish by the lovers of fun and rigmarole : yet at the hazard of provoking a wide difference of opinion, at the hazard of condemning our own Penny Journal, which we regard as the apple of our eye, we must censure the indulgence of that vitiated taste which delights in broad grins and caricatured exhibitions of national character and manners ; a taste at variance with every just and proper feeling, and which sacrifices to laughter and often unmeaning merriment both truth and reality. We have no objection whatever to legends and stories told in that pleasant and amiable spirit which, without distorting the entire features, playfully exhibits national habits and provincial peculiarities in a grotesque and amusingly whimsical manner : but we do enter our protest against those libels on Irishmen and Irish character which are such favourites with a great mass of the people. We frankly confess that we have yielded more to this prevailing vitiated taste than we otherwise might have done, had we to deal solely with a class of readers whose literary taste was regulated on

just and proper principles ; and though we feel the injury which it has inflicted, and which the continued indulgence of it will yet inflict, on the character of the nation at large, we have had to struggle, as it were, against the stream, and have frequently had the mortification to hear our laughter-loving, legend-devouring, and story-reading friends censure us as being dull dogs, and our Journal as devoid of excitement.

It would be well if some Irish writers would take a lesson from the late Sir Walter Scott. Where, in all the creations of his prolific imagination, do we find him holding up *his* countrymen to scorn and contempt, as blundering good-humoured idiots, or barefaced audacious witty knaves ? No : if he paints a character whom we detest, he so isolates him, that our contempt falls on the individual, not on the nation ; while his ludicrous characters are good-natured exaggerations, not offensive caricatures. And all that is lovely in the social and domestic virtues he has incorporated with the nation at large : Jeanie Deans is not a solitary being, but the representative of her class. We call upon Irishmen to imitate his example, to repudiate the literature which vitiates their taste, and degrades the national character, which associates falsehood and absurdity with wit, and would identify *stupid cunning* as a prominent feature in the character of the nation.

Let us then recommend to our countrymen a species of reading of a nobler and higher character. The book of creation is unrolled before us ; earth, air, and ocean has its many wonders and its mighty forms ; there are stores of lightning in the clouds of heaven, and caverns of fire in the bowels of the earth ; the stars above are looking down with a mild and radiant lustre on our little world ; the moon is circling round, and the tides are rushing over the ocean. Oh, what a glorious world do those shut themselves out of, who walk through life without lifting their thoughts above the little dwelling-place of selfishness which envelopes them. They hear the thunder roll, and they inquire not the cause ; they feel the genial breeze, and they think not how it comes ; they see the spirit of the storm treading the waters, and they stand unawed by the sublimity of the scene. Nature, to them, is utterly and entirely a sealed book. Tell them of the atmosphere, how it encircles the earth, and revolves with the earth, that all animals live in it as fish live in water, that one of its constituents is a noxious element, which, if it prevailed in quantity, would smite the globe with sudden and universal death, and that the superabundance of another of its constituents would wrap it in one fierce and general flame—and they would smile incredulously. They cannot comprehend any one of the simplest operations of nature, and as little do they care ; contented with witnessing effects, they never dream of inquiring after the cause. The peasantry of Ireland are reputed to be sharp, apt, and intelligent ; they are sharp in detecting motives and appreciating character ; apt and intelligent in comprehension and conversation ; bold, and manly, daring and reckless in carrying their schemes into execution ; and they have a profound veneration for whatever has even the semblance of learning. Yet they are sadly deficient in solid, practical information ; they know not the language of nature ; and he who would widely diffuse amongst them popular knowledge on popular subjects ; who would imbue them with a taste for the simpler details of natural philosophy, and thus open to them the door of the vast laboratory of creation, would confer a great national benefit. Scientific information gives to its possessor a manly and practical cast of mind ; and while a smattering in classical lore has often no other effect than to induce pedantry and pomposity, a little sprinkling of science has a tendency to excite a greater thirst for the knowledge which it imparts.

The antiquities and ancient literature of our country have occupied no inconsiderable space in this periodical. Two classes of our readers have been, with regard to them, very difficult to please. The first consist of those whom, without intending any offence, we must term the class, or rather the mass, of mere superficial readers, who read a page from the same kind of feeling that they would eat an apple—because it gives pleasure for the moment

To these, the very word *antiquities* has a dry and musty look; it is bodied out in the form of a spectral old man, whose blood is frozen, poring over some old, rust-eaten weapon, or handling with idolatrous affection some crazy vessel, which they scarcely could bring themselves to touch. Or if they can fancy him unrolling old records, and attempting to decipher old characters, they regard him as a vision of the past, a being who has buried himself alive, and over whose mortal remains it is seemly and decent to draw the veil of forgetfulness. True, the study of antiquities may be rendered, in the hands of a couceited, a phlegmatic, or a stupid man, one of the most intolerable of all the intolerable things under the sun. But those who set no value on antiquities whatever, would pass over a plain strewn around with the remains and memorials of generations who "breathed three thousand years ago," without the slightest emotion; they would stand on the tombs of the illustrious dead, and never dream that if the dust of the valley could spring to life, the sounds which those hills reverberated in years of which scarcely a tradition remains, would again awaken the slumbering echo, and the wild solitude be once more peopled with human beings. But the other class of our readers to whom we alluded, run just into the opposite extreme. They know that Ireland is a storehouse of relics; they see the undoubted testimonials of former greatness in every corner of the island: but misled by prejudice and prepossession, they give ear to fables of the most ridiculous kind, and believe in the existence of individuals who only lived in the brains of chroniclers. Thus the one class think we give too much of our space to antiquities, the other too little; the one think we exceed all due limit, the other that we do not go far enough. In endeavouring to steer a middle course, to convince the sceptic and cure the fabulist, we have had to struggle with weakness and incredulity on the one side, and strongly-rooted prejudice on the other. If we ultimately succeed in establishing in the first class a taste, and a spirit, and a feeling, for the antiquities of the country, and in correcting and enlightening the taste and knowledge of the second, we will have effected some good; and we would recommend all our readers to pursue the subject with ardour, to assist in clearing away the mists which yet overhang the study, and thus endeavour to establish the history of Ireland on the firm basis of truth. And he has no true love of country who would not feel an interest in the discussion. Let him, if he is annoyed by the sight of, or the search after, antiquities, seek an American forest or an Australian waste, where throughout the vast region no memorial exists to indicate that aught but the pine tree or the stunted shrub has tenanted the soil since the retiring waters crept into the ocean. Let him at least not mock the guileless enthusiasm of those who cannot rest in a land covered with the memorials of the past, without curiously attempting to hold converse with the dead, and who anxiously inquire what kind of beings they were that have left behind them such palpable evidences of their existence and power. "Far from me, and from my friends," exclaims Dr. Johnson, on the island of Icolmkill, "be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

This train of thought could be pursued to a considerable length, but we must recollect that it is for the Penny Journal this is written. We intended to have talked of Agriculture, of Astronomy, of Chemistry—to show that even a faint and not very accurate conception of the different branches of philosophy has a useful tendency, far above that species of dabbling in the classics, to which Irishmen of the lower and middle classes are partial, inasmuch as the one fills the mind with *ideas*, the other with *words*—but the subject can be resumed, if another opportunity may occur. In the meantime, let the dissemination of useful knowledge be the object of every friend of the country—none but the sycophant or the tyrant may dread the enlargement of the kingdom of intellect.

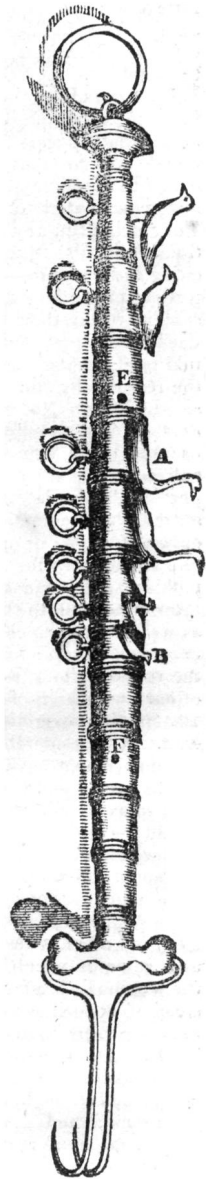
F.

ANCIENT IRISH INSTRUMENT

The very extraordinary piece of antiquity represented in the annexed wood-cut was found in a bog at Ballymoney, county of Antrim, and exhibited to the Royal Irish Academy by the Lord Bishop of Down, in March, 1829. Its material is that description of bronze of which all the ancient Irish weapons, &c. are composed, and its actual size is four times that of the representation. It is a tube, divided by joints at A and B into three parts, which, on separating were found to contain brass wire, in a zigzag form, a piece of which is represented in fig. G. This wire appears to have been originally elastic, but when found was in a state of considerable decomposition. At E and F are two holes, about one-eighth of an inch in diameter, and seem intended for rivets or pins to hold the instrument together. The birds move on loose pins, which pass through the tube, and on the other end are rings.

The material and style of workmanship of this singular instrument leave no doubt of its high antiquity. The Irish croziers of the sixth century are often ornamented with birds in this manner. But we confess ourselves totally unable to form even a rational conjecture as to its probable use, and should feel obliged to any antiquary who would throw light upon it.

P.



THE NORTHERN CLOCK.

The power of calculating the revolutions of the different hours and seasons by observing the unchanging phenomena of nature, appears to be the earliest effort of the human intellect. An American Indian, who never heard what it is to solve Equations or invent Logarithms, and who has nothing to note the hour of the day, but the passing of the shadows from tree to rivulet, from hill to hill, and, lastly, from one Cordillera to another, as the sun sets over the land of his worshippers, can tell with more precision the period of the Equinoxes, and the Solstitial rains, than could be acquired by studying the Emyrean of Ptolemy or the Vortices of Descartes; and he reads in that book, whose pages lie open to every one, and whose language is intelligible to all, both laws for his agricultural prosperity and examples for his conduct. But this dependence on the guidance of nature, stops at a certain degree of civilization; men soon adopt a more artificial method of calculating the proper seasons for the different branches of husbandry than the rising and setting of the hyades; calculation is substituted for observation, and the appearance and departure of worlds can be determined by tracing a few figures on a sheet of paper. It has often been attempted, but as yet without much success—at least in